## AMENDMENTS

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please amend Claim 1 as follows. The remaining claims are reiterated below for the convenience of the Examiner.

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a plurality of reagent test strips, said method comprising:

(a) providing a test strip precursor comprising an elongated support material having a first planar surface and a stripe of reagent material positioned along a central axis thereof; and

(b) cutting said test strip precursor into a plurality of reagent test strips according to an inter-digitating pattern comprising a series of inter-laced projections positioned on said test strip precursor, wherein each of said strips produced includes a sample region and a handling region, where said reagent material is located in said sample region.

2. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said test strip precursor is a continuous tape.

3. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said test strip precursor is a card, wherein said card has a generally rectangular shape.

4. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said reagent material comprises a signal producing system.

5. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein said signal producing system produces a color that can be related to the concentration of an analyte in a sample contacted with said reagent material.

6. (Original) The method according to Claim 4, wherein said signal producing system produces an electrical current that can be related to the concentration of an analyte in a sample contacted with said reagent material.

7. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said method further comprises producing said test strip precursor.

8. (Previously Cancelled)

9. (Original) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said sample region includes a hole in said support material which is covered by said reagent material.

10. (Previously Amended) The method according to Claim 8, wherein said sample region of said strip has an aspect ratio of about 0.5 relative to the handling region.

11. (Original) The method according to Claim 1, wherein said test strips produced by said method can be used in a hand-held optical meter.

12. (Previously Cancelled)

13. (Original) A reagent test strip produced according to the method of Claim 1, wherein said reagent test strip has a sample region and a handling region, wherein said reagent material is located in said sample region.

14. (Previously Amended) The reagent test strip according to Claim 13, wherein said sample region of said strip has an aspect ratio of about 0.5 relative to the handling region.

15. (Previously Cancelled)

16. (Original) The reagent test strip according to Claim 15, wherein said reagent test strip can be read by a hand held optical meter.

17. (Previously Cancelled)

18. (Original) A method for determining the concentration of an analyte in a sample, said method comprising:

(a) applying a fluid sample to a reagent test strip of Claim 13;

(b) detecting a signal from said reagent test strip; and

(c) relating said detected signal to the concentration of analyte in said sample to determine the concentration of said analyte in said fluid sample.

19. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, wherein said fluid sample is a biological sample.

20. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, wherein said analyte is glucose.

21. (Original) The method according to Claim 18, wherein said detecting and relating steps are performed by a hand held optical meter.

22. (Previously Cancelled)

23. (Original) A kit for use in determining the concentration of an analyte in a physiological sample, said kit comprising:

(a) a reagent test strip according to Claim 13; and

(b) at least one of:

(i) a means for obtaining said physiological sample; and

(ii) an analyte standard.

24. (Original) The kit according to Claim 23, wherein said means for obtaining said physiological sample is a lance.

25. (Original) The kit according to Claim 23, wherein said analyte standard comprises a standardized concentration of a known reagent.

26. (Original) The kit according to Claim 23, wherein said kit comprises said means for obtaining said physiological sample and said analyte standard.

27. (Original) The kit according to Claim 23, wherein said kit further comprises a hand held optical meter.

28. (Previously Cancelled)